

On my travels abroad, many questioned me "Where is Ceylon"? Ceylon is like a pearl pendant at the nose of India. In ancient times, India and Ceylon were connected but an earthquake and eruption separated them. Ceylon became smaller in size. Ptolemy's map shows it much larger. Ceylon Buddhist chronicles say that the present Ceylon is one-twelfth of the original size. Geologists state that the Maldiv Islands, which are now 400 miles away, formed part of Ceylon. (The Formation of Maldives p.23.J.S.Gardiner).

North Ceylon is almost flat, and South hilly. Cave men or stone age people came to Ceylon from India or through the mainland. Paleolithic implements discovered in Ceylon, are of an archaic type and similar to those belonging to the aborigines of India. The village of Atchuvely is at the north-end of Ceylon, separated by sea from Iddia by about thirty miles. A king of Ayodhya is celebrated in song and story. The epic Ramayana mentions that Rama, king of Ayodhya came to Ceylon to rescue his queen Sita who was kidnapped by Ravana, king of Ceylon. According to a Ceylon Buddhist chronicle, this happened 2370 years before Christ. There is a tradition that Rama came to Atchuvely. While his army men were thirsty, he sank a rod at Navukiri, a hamlet of Atchuvely saying: "Namakku neer Navukiri" (Navukiri, give us water) and water gushed forth. Navukiri is now divided and the spot where this happened, is now joined with Puttur, an adjoining division at the southern boundary. There is now on that spot a bottomless well. This is called Nilavarai or tidal well. Its water is never exhausted.

When I was a boy, I saw a European Engineer, sent by the Government, trying for days to empty the well, but the water was almost on the same level defying pumps worked by power. When the fresh water on top was pumped out, sea water is six miles away. This well is three miles away from Stone House, where my parents lived. Poet Subavakiam praised the land with tall groves of humming bees and my father as a philanthropist protecting people as the dark clouds without the least thought of self, who raised Atchuvely to its peak with his relentless energy; and as the beautiful radiant lamp of the Sindu Ganga Nanda Vamsa (dynasty). Sindh is the country bordering on the Indus-Ganga means river Nanda is a prince. The followers of Prince Vijaya who invaded Ceylon in 543 B.C. were Geengetic Settlers. Their descendants settled in North Ceylon and called themselves the people of Gangakula or Ganga Vamsa. In 1242 A.D. our ancestor named Kalinga Magha of Ganga Vamsa, married a princess of North Ceylon. He eventually became emperor of Ceylon and a part of South India, including Rameswaram. In the previous century, there was a Ceylon king, Pararasasekaram, who received 1000 boat-loads of paddy from the Chola king Sangaran Adayan, patron of Poet Kambar of Ramayana fame "to reach Kandy" (Chola Mandala Satakam). There was famine in Kandyan territories then under the North Ceylon king. Kalinga Magha married a descendant of Pararasasekaran. Throne names of the North Ceylon kings were ParaRasaSekaran and Seka rasasekaran taken alternatively from the time of Kalinga Magha. The trouble began when Sekarasasekaran VII (1519-1561) usurped the place of the legitimate heir to the throne ParaNirupaSingham (mentioned by Zueiroz as Vagru Ticury Pandasao). The prince who was then residing at Atchuvely went to Goa with his retinue and appealed to the King of Portugal through St.Francis Xavier to redress his grievance. This unfortunate prince who was Regent of Atchuvely and six other villages under his aged father Pararasasekaran VI (1467-1519) left a son Tidaveera Singhamudali who was made chieftain of Atchuvely during the overlordship of the Portugese crown, with the title of Raja-

father Pararasasudhan
Singhamudali who was made chieftain of Atchuvvely during the
overlordship of the Portugese crown, with the title of Raja-
madapali (belonging to the royal house of madapali - a royal

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royal village in Orissa) This sister princess Vetavalli's
second daughter married Sittampala Mudali. I married a
great-grand daughter of Tiruchelva Rayar, son of Sittampala
Mudali. Near the end of the 18th Century, a son of nobility
from Manipay, a royal village*, wended his way towards Atchuvvely
where the Dutch commandeur was to appoint an Aratchi (Sheriff)
for Atchuvvely. The Commandeur was talking to Sima Udayar
(Revenue Officer) of Atchuvvely, and wanted to send a message to
Mallakam, five miles away. He asked the Udayar to send the
message by some one and get a reply. The Udayar called Tillai-
ampalam and asked him to go on the mission. The young man ran
like a race-horse through a foot-path in thick jungle infested
with wild-boars, deadly snakes, stags, hares and monkeys, and
returned with the reply, while the Commandeur and the Udayar
were still standing and talking. The former was astonished at
the speed he brought the reply and asked the latter: "Who is
this young man?" The Udayar replied: "He is my nephew". The
Commandeur was pleased with the aspirant for the post and appoint
him Aratchi of Atchuvvely. He later married the Udayar's daughter
and brought forth my grandfather Santiago Udayar. Tillaiampalam
Aratchi, cleared from the plain of Atchuvvely (Valli) all robbers
and thieves so much so that even a child could walk safely alone
through the uninabited plain, where my direct paternal ancestor
of the seventeenth century shot a high-way robber sleeping in the
air, by entwining the leaves of two palmyra palms like a hammock.
A gentleman came to my grandfather who was then a powerful chief
-ain and said: "I am heavily involved in a civil case. My lands
will be sold. I have no money to redeem them. I have no peace
of mind". The Udayar listened patiently to his tale of woe and
said: I have no other solution to your case than your emigration
to a French territory in India. There you can earn and save
money and in course of time you will be able to redeem your land
from mortgage" Then he engaged for him a catamaran (Kaddumaram)
is made by tying tree-trunks together. It has a small sail) Then
the small raft with its white sail was seen floating on the wave
of the blue sea, silhouetted against the clear azure sky. The
two sons who accompanied him were educated in India. One became
an eminent poet and writer who crossed swords with the Hindu
leader Arumuga Navalar, when he was Professor at St. Patrick's
College, Jaffna in North Ceylon. He helped the Irish Principal
Fr. Patrick Dunne to produce the Tamil-English Dictionary which
was used by English Civil Servants. He was my teacher and when
I sang in his class quatrains of Maladiyar, or Beshi's Tembavan
the Head Master Savermuttu would suddenly appear from whatever
corner of the College and listen to my melodious voice enraptured.
In the last century, A Ceylonese nobleman approached the throne
of Queen Victoria of England. He was my granduncle Muttucumara
Swamy. He recited in his own verse before Her Majesty the story
of Harichandra, king of Ayodhya, who lost his kingdom and his
queen, for he would not utter a lie. Vismamitra, a Rishi or
legislator, asked him to tell an untruth, but the king said:
"Even if I lose my kingdom, I will not utter a lie". Then by
the machination of the Rishi, he lost his kingdom and his queen.
But Providence restored him his kingdom and his queen. The
truth triumphed. At the end of the story the Ceylonese added:
I am descendant of King Harichandra. The queen was pleased to
hear such an exquisite declamation and bestowed on him the
accolade with her sword and said: "Sir Muttucumaraswamy, arise
and be a member in the British period

* Manipay is called Maniampaty - a land held on free tenure by royal privilege. Some members of the Jaffna Royal House who were taken to Colombo by the Portugese returned to Jaffna and settled down at Manipay, Naval, Anaicoddai and Sandiruppal.

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In the year 1880, the only Stone House at Atchuvvely was in festive garb Nagasuram-Eastern clarionet-discoursed sweet melody. Nadduvamelam-Eastern ^{down} one side-bass-drummed by a short blunt stick, the other side-tenor-played by fingers in delicate rythm; Dahora-twin drums in halves the bass one drummed by a cane shaped on top like 'S' and the tenor one by a small rod, the cane ^{now} and then went to the assistance of the rod to produce brisk rythm; ^{unai} kulal the drove gave the pitch, and cymbals jingled-all producing orchestral harmony. It was a house-warming day for my parents. Nearly two years before, they were united in marriage and lived like flower and scent at the house of my grandfather, the first gentleman of Atchuvvely, a representative of law and order. His house was called "Edducharveedu"-eightverandahed square house of red-clay walls, the roof made with palmyra rafters and thatched with palmyra leaves which gave a cooling effect. A court-yard in the centre admitted light. In the inner verandahs, there were huge baskets plaited with strips of palmyra palm leaves, containing paddy. They were over a man's height. Several pairs of white of white Sindh bulls ploughed his fields. He sat in front porch on a raised floor covered with Persian carpet and propped by a huge pillow behind. Whenever people came for inquiry he wore a purple silk gold-brocaded turban like a Crown. His ears bore a number of artistically wrought gold ear-rings. Now the time had come for my parents to live apart from their parents. Stone House was formerly a visitors' hall built with white solid rough-hewn stone walls 2 feet thick. My father Tambimuttu Pulavar, renovated this hall with new rooms and a storey. He broke open one of his rocky lands and quarried the natural rock directly at the site and built walls of great chunks and mortar. He covered the rough exterior of the walls with mortar to provide a smooth surface. Mortar was a mixture of seasand and lime made by burning coral stones quarried from natural coral rock along the seacoast. Villagers called this Kalveedu (Stone House) as this was the first house built with stones in the village, except the ruins of a church, which was first built by the Portuguese in 1627 and later completed by the Dutch. Its massive fivefoot walls of great chunks coral rock and mortar are still as strong as a rampart. Behind the church is attached a room with lofty walls without a visible door. Many wonder how entrance was gained to this room, which was once occupied by the Dutch historian Baldeus between 1658 and 1665 A.D. In a description of the East India coasts of Malabar and Coromandel with the adjacent Kingdom and Province of Empire of Ceylon" he says of Atchuvvely as follows:- "The Church Achiavelli lies about 2 hours from Telipole. It is large and lofty structure built of stone, capable of containing 2000 persons, it was not finished till our time. The village lies extremely pleasant & among the woods stored with vast quantities of Turtle Doves who coo at certain hours 3 times a day. They have also plenty of hares, stags and wild boars but are also annoyed by serpents. As divers old Brahmins live in this place so were the inhabitants not so forward in embracing the Christian religion. The ancient Brahmin named Philipps does not want the fundamentals of our religion but is more inclined to the historical than the dontrinal part. Among others there lived here a certain Brahmin, a learned person with whom I used to have frequent conversation whilst I lived at Achiaveli. He was baptised at last in the 46th year of his age; and afterwards wrote the

last in the 46th year of his age; and afterwards wrote the History of the Life and Passion of our Saviour in a lofty poetical style in the Latin Malabar called Sanskrit which is quite different from the common Malabar characters. The school here has about 4 or 500 boys and the church 8 or 900 auditors."

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About 3 miles from Stone House is an ancient port now abandoned. In 1110 A.D. a general named Karunakara Tondaman sent by Chola king Kulotunga to subdue Ceylon made an estuary to shelter the boats which removed salt to the king. This port at the estuary end, was named Tondamanar after him. The estuary is the eastern boundary of Atchuvely. During the time when trouble was brewing among the usurper Sankily Rajah, the legitimate heirs to the throne and the Portuguese, two of our princesses were sent to Tanjore through this port and later brought back without the knowledge of the Portuguese and married to two Kandyan princes, sons of King Senevirat.

I was born in Stone House on July 15, 1887. Hindus call it Adikool Day. Adi means July and kool boiled rice, grain in the field or the green growing crops, which gave the meaning to the porridge kool. After one year, Stone House was plunged in sorrow. Baby Tambiturai, my early self, was on the point of death. The physician Velauter said: "Give urine to the baby". Signifying that the baby would not survive. Then my maternal grand father Gardiner Sittampalam of Manipay brought a Specialist who said that the state of the baby was critical. My grandfather began to cry like a child, for he loved the baby who resembled him most. The physician used rare and costly drugs and saved the baby's life. This induced my father to take interest in Materia Medica and later published a book on the subject at his Press. He reared medicinal herbs in his garden. So my parents fondled the baby, and adorned him with gold necklace set with precious stones called panchantamani and a gold waiststring, with artistic pendant araimoodi salangai. They were hospitable to visitors and passersby. One day an old woman was given shelter for the night under their roof and she observed the artistic jewels. Another night she came for shelter and bolted away with baby's jewels and the mother's goldbrocaded silk cloth. Early morning my parents found these things missing. My father went eight miles in search of this woman and found that she had buried the jewels under ground and had gone to stool on the spot. When I was three years young, my father composed and produced Estakiar Nadaham (Eustace Opera) with Earnatic music and dance for the first time in Ceylon. Adjoining Stone House, he put up a globe theatre as in Shakespearean days, actors going round. Among the graceful dances performed, my childish fancy was attracted by a dancer on a wooden ball about 2 ft. diameter, rolling it under his feet his hands swinging two brass plates with gesture to suit the rythm of music. Even a dog participated in the opera by climbing the pillars of the theatre. I was attracted by the rythmatic harmony of Salangai, attached to the legs of dancers. It is a leather-cylinder 6 inches high attached with many tiny bells round like grapes and shotslike balls more within. After the dances, I used to pick up the fallen bells, get them tied round my tiny legs and dance. Now I am a boy taking delight in nature. The sun rises half in the blue horizon like the golden dome of St. Peter's and emerges slowly, growing to a full fiery orb, shedding its brilliant rays flat on human face. It paints a scene of white stork and heron hunting for fishes crabs and prawns in the blue estuary, preferring the tastier fish of shallow water to that of the deep ocean. Pigeons and snipes are busy in the field with ripe ears of golden paddy. The tobacco garden near Stone House is protected with milkhedge or Indian tree spurge which climbs kovvai, a climbing plant noted for its red

white stork and heron hunting for fishes crabs and prawns in the blue estuary, preferring the tastier fish of shallow water to that of the deep ocean. Pigeons and snipes are busy in the field with ripe ears of golden paddy. The tobacco garden near Stone House is protected with milkhedge or Indian tree spurge on which climbs kovvai, a climbing plant noted for its red edible fruit, to which the lips are compared in poetry, and its vitaminous leaves are used to make the gods' drink kool - a porridge made of palmyra nut-shoots dried and powdered, mixed with fish, prawn, crab, jakfruit sliced, pea, tapioca sliced, rice, tamarind fruit, turmeric and chilly. Tobacco-drying adobe sheds and conical shaped cowbyres in the farm bask in sunlight. My paternal aunt Mrs. Karalar wends her way towards Stone House. She was a daily visitor so my eldest brother, who was later known as Swami Gnana Prakasar, nicknamed her Vadikkai Ma^{ma} - customary aunt. She used to speak often in imagery interspersed with verses and proverbs. One day she told me: "Your mother was brought here by your father from a fort surrounded by sevenfold ramparts. (This

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(This alludes to her ancestor Ramar of Anaicoddai-Elephant-Fort-who was a scion of the seventeenth century.) She was beautiful as the painted images in Ajanta caves. She had perfect features as Tapati, the daughter of sun-god-out of the sixtyfour arts known to Eastern women, she knew most of them. Uncle Karalar used to sing an old quatrain and say: "Your mother has all the qualities mentioned in this ancient description of an ideal wife". So my parents led a happy life in Stone House surrounded by shady groves of various kinds of trees. There were different varieties of mangotrees that yielded luscious fruits rarely had in other parts of the East. When the swaying branches of the dusky boughs flower, many new flowers fall closely like rain drops. From this my mother taught me a proverb: "Don't rejoice, seeing your children and mango flowers". Before sunrise, the magpie with its black and white plumage, chatters from the top branches of the tree: "Chee chee, chee, chee, mutatai kooddadi" "What does it say?" I question my mother. She explains: "Chee is an interjection of contempt, shame and disgust like pshaw. The bird is disgusted with the housewife who sleeps till the sunrise. It wants her to get up and "sweep the compound" (Muttam=compound Muttatai is its accusative form Koodu=sweep Adi, an exclamation addressed to a female in contempt). There was Iluppai or Iruppai-South Indian mahua (*Bassia longifolia*) on which epiphytic plants take root. Its fresh blossom was compared by Poet Kabilar to a lady who lives with her husband and the faded blossom to the drooping woman who is separated from her husband. Its blossoms fall closely and cover the ground like frost. Women slip under the tree to gather them early in the morning before others do it. These are a substitute for sugar. My mother taught me a proverb from the blossom: "Iluppai blossom is sugar in a place that has no sugarcane press". Wine is made from the blossom. At night bats fall on its fruits and suck the juice of the soft integuments and drop down the refuse and the seeds. Hence the proverb said my mother: "The fruit eaten by the bat (comes) out by the mouth, out by the mouth". The flesh of the bats is relished by some who spread a net on two long bamboo poles and entice them. Oil is pressed from the seeds. Iluppai oil of Atchuvely has a large demand, owing to its distinct taste and flavour. It is used to fry curry or as medical application for rheumatism. The refuse of the pressed seeds in cake form is used like soap. A fishwoman from Myliddy four miles away walks daily to Stone House. My mother selects the best fish and is ready to pay for it. But Arumai- her name meaning 'dear'-refuses payment. Why?

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Coconut palms rise

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Coconut palms rise high to a hundred feet with their beautiful green feathery leaves forming a radiating front which sways like a dancer to the music of gale resisting it against the azure sky bunches of fruits hang high and fall when matured. It is strange that they rarely fell on people. Once my father sent me on an errand to my uncle the Udayar at that time. I was running through his grove and a coconut was falling. My uncle shouted and I stopped and the coconut fell just in front of me missing me by a few inches. The Udayar was astonished. For immediate necessity Nalavan the climber, climbs the palm to pluck the nuts. My father never allowed his garden palms at Atchuvely for tapping toddy which inebriates. The palms at Atchuvely were noted for their pedigree height and fertility. Hence the proverb "Like the coconut palms of Atchuvely". Young coconuts with their jam-like meat and alelike water offer a cool drink. My father explained to me how young coconuts should be taken. Coconuts called sevilaneer red young coconuts- and devuli are the best to be taken fresh. It is not good to take them before meals. If so taken continually for days, they cause a chronic enlargement in the abdomen causing indigestion, colic and emaciation. It is better to take them after meals, as Sekarasasekaram, our ancient medical work says: "If you take young coconut after meals, it will cure rheumatism, bile and phlegmatic diseases, reduce overheat in the body and improve health". This medical work was produced by Sekarasasekaran V(1380). During his regime an Indian army landed in North Ceylon to invade the island and the king personally led his soldiers and with his special deadly sword put to death many an enemy. This physician measured the corpses and wrote the part of this work on anatomy. It was written all in verse by steel style on palmyra leaves. My uncle the Udayar of Pandaterippu possessed such an education, but he refused to give it to my father, who got round his sister the Udayar's wife and removed a leaf at a time, replace it and got another thus copied the complete education and printed it at his press for the first time for the

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Naked negro panning at the line

Boasts of his golden sand and palmy wine

My memory goes back to the last century when a man of Atchuvely distilled excellent liquor from palmyra toddy. He keeps a few gallons of toddy in a jug, mixed with jaggery and bark of Gum Arabic tree. After a few days he heats the mixture through his curious still and the steam falls drop by drop through a pipe into another vessel. Thus he produced an excellent liquor called arrack which cannot be had for money in any other part of the world. It is healthier to take palmyra than coconut arrack or toddy. Palmyra toddy cures malaria and other ailments. Nungu the pulpy edible kernal of the young palmyra fruit was a favourite of my grandfather. It removes thirst, bile, prickly heat, skin diseases, cools the system and creates appetite. A poet in Maladiyar draws a lesson from Nungu: "When the inner fluids are removed the human eye resembles the scooped out hollows of the young palmyra fruit. Knowing this I have determined to renounce the world. Will I falter in my resolve when I hear fools, blind to the truth, comparing the eye of a woman to the lily, the warring carp, or the bright javelin". Another tree which was in our garden which attracted me is Ilavared flowered silk cotton tree. It spreads its branches horizontally like a high mast. When its fruits are matured they burst and spread the silkcotton and seeds to the four corners. My mother taught me a proverb from this: "Like the parrot that watched the Ilavu tree" (Bombax malabaricum)

Plantain trees of many varieties produce fruits. My mother cooks according to Malapaham-Eastern cookery - fifteen varieties of curry from the plantain pith, flower, flower-cone, unripe fruit and rind and fruit.

Fragrance fills the morning air. Areca, chempaca, punnai - Alexandrian laurel - and rose and jasmine flowers commune with the nose before they reach the eye.

Cassia (konrai), oleander (alari) nantia - vaddam - Taberne montana coronaria - Chittaratai - Alpinia Chinensis - adorn the park with their beautiful vari-coloured clusters. Bright red shoe-flower and flamboyant blaze their floral colours.

(Chikiscus)

Birds of vari-coloured plumes nestle in branches of trees and fronds of palms. The black crows squawk and scavenge the dirt in the compound. Hedge-crows with their oop, oop, oop, call to prayer. Turtle doves and pigeons of many kinds coo. Kuyil - the Indian cuckoo - a bird celebrated in Indian poetry for the sweetness of its notes - sings its sweet notes. Various birds of similar kinds join in chorus. Partridges chant in tremulous notes.

My father catches live partridges when they rest in thickets at dusk, encloses them in a wire-netting cage and sends them to the Governor in Colombo. Even in the cage they recite their morning notes.

Green parrots with red bent beaks feed on the tinai (Panicum italicum) farms. Minas which could talk like parrots, wood-peckers in bright plumes with their axe-like beaks making holes with thuds on trees, and tiny pila-coddai-kuruvis - birds like the Jak fruit nut, peacock and hen, and many other varieties of birds were in our sanctuary.

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Eagles fly high in the air at night during certain migrating season. One night an eagle rested on our roof, flapped its wings like storm and flew away.

There were hares, deer, monkeys, jackals, and other animals in a reserved park.

My father was Division Officer collecting poll-tax, Registrar of Marriages, Births and Deaths, and juror of the Supreme Court.

Later he was Village President; he sent reports to the Village Tribunal. He was responsible for maintenance of village roads.

He drives his horse-carriage when he goes to town. When he leaves home my mother offers him betel rolled with sliced-areca-nut and chunam. He wears a gold-brocaded rose-silk turban, ear-rings set with brilliants, and finger-ring with a large brilliant. His feet are shod with Indian slippers with a curl on top. He wears a close neck coat, and a white verti with special foldings at the end (kotiyyam).

(Shewani
or ashtkan)

One day a new large Arab drawing the carriage of Wm. Mather, a banker - my father's cousin - clashed with my father's pony and he was thrown out, injuring his knee-cap. So later he had a car. He introduced bus service round Valiganam.

When I was a boy of twelve, there was no car. The first one I saw was the Governor's car when he came to visit St. Patrick's College.

5/ There was no train-service. It was Fr. J. Collin who first suggested a train service to Jaffna, when he was the Editor of the Jaffna Catholic Guardian, whose assistant I was in a later period. The suggestion was taken up by Fr. Lytton who went to London and induced the authorities to open the Jaffna Railway. When commissioners came to investigate the feasibility of the service, my father staged a drama, showing the necessity of such a service. In one viruta poem he foretells the colonisation of Vanni and the benefits that would accrue to Ceylon.

The first locomotive engine I saw was working at Upparu and I walked a few miles from the town to see it.

Air service came only in this century. The first air-plane I saw was at Singapore in 1919 when I was on the editorial staff of The Malaya Tribune and interviewed Captain Ross Smith who won the prize for the first successful flight from England to Australia. A tall French airman, whom I interviewed at Adelphi Hotel, crashed at Batavia and lost his prize.

Now to come to my boyhood, my father did not care for my academic qualification. He wanted me to sing and act at his theatre he put up near Stone House. Every Friday I returned home from the College, Saturday I had to act and sing in his Opera. People came from forty miles to hear my singing and see my acting.

All were admitted to the theatre by paying for tickets, except our relatives who were given free feed and free ticket. Along the verandah of Stone House our guests sit in two rows. It was my mother who was busy every Saturday for one year preparing tasty curries and boiled rice and serve the guests not in plates but in plantain leaves. She was an expert on cooking and there was none to compete with her. She could prepare thirty curries at a time. When Europeans come, my father gets a cook to dress meat in Western way, but they discard it and call for my mother's preparation roasted in coconut milk to a golden colour with spices whose fragrance wafts in the air and creates an appetite.

with Whenever my father walks on the road, those who squat by it stand up or pass to a hiding place. Wherever there is a riot, he goes there to put it down. Once there was a reception to a French priest at Valvedditturai, an old port. Fisherman there engaged Nadduvam (Oriental orchestra) in his honour. Hindus of the place objected to this, creating a riot. The priest was shivering from fear. My father went and argued with them, but they persisted in stopping the orchestra. He then sent a wire to the Superintendent of the Police who came and restored order. to

This reminds me of another incident when my father was a boy, my grand-father taught him courage and bravery. In an adjoining village, Passion Show (pasu) takes place annually. A certain chapter on Passion was read by my father. Some jealous people said that the following year he would not be allowed to do so. But my grand-father insisted his son would continue to read it. On that occasion, he told his son "Even if your head is smitten, don't get down from the reading platform." So the boy read the passion and when it was over, people saw an army of Kattikarar (soldiers with long knives from the time of our ancient kings) emerging from the adjoining palm-groves.

In the year 1878 when my parents married with all the pomp and glory of oriental ceremony, there was a child of three years, of fair and golden complexion of Devas, with intelligent eyes. He was brought to Atcharvely with the greatest difficulty. For he was the son of a Maniam or Manager of a Hindu temple whom my mother married first and after his death, the child's relatives jealously guarded him as the heir to his father's property. The

child brought up by my father from the age of three imitated him in daring deeds, courage and culture. Later in life the child became a priest and scholar, came to be known to the world as Swami Gnana Prakasar. He was acknowledged as the foremost Dravidian philologist. He consulted seventy languages to produce his "Etymological and Comparative Lexicon of the Tamil Language." He showed the fact that Dravidian and Indo-European words were actually derived from the same primitive roots and gave the meaning of each root which so far other philologists failed to find out. The roots go to the very foundation of human language.

An American missionary told me "If Fr. Gnana Prakasar had been born in America, he would have been advertised throughout the whole world."

My father named his Press after him, where he published a journal for fifty years. It was established in 1884. It has published over hundred books of versified lines, and theatricals, devotional and doctrinal literature, various tracts in verse, novels and medical books.

One day I asked my brother Prakasar "Why is my father called Pulavar?"

He said "Pulavar is a poet or learned man. Your father is a born poet and a cultured man."

"Are there any more such men in our family?"

"There is Arnold Satasivam, a no mean poet and writer, who warned us that the epic Iraku Vammisam is a terror even to the most learned, as it embodies sentiments very difficult to grasp."

"What is the epic?"

"It is the pride of Jaffna to possess a classical translation of Kalidasa's Raghu Vamsa, parallel to that of Valmiki's Ramayana by Kamban Kalidasa, the greatest poet of India, is generally said to have flourished in the early part of the fifth century A.D. His great work literally "The Race of Raghu" second only perhaps to his own Sakuntala is the delight of all students of Sanskrit, as it was mine when I was initiating myself into the beauties of Sanskrit literature in my young days. It is a rapid sketch of the legendary history of a long line of kings. It describes the life of Rama, together with some account of his predecessors and successors in the kingdom of Ayodhya."

"In recent times the Raghu Vamsa has been translated into Latin by Stenzler and into French by Hippolyte Fauche. T.H. Griffith's Idylls from the Sanskrit are taken chiefly from the Raghu Vamsa. Our own Tamil translation was produced at the end of the sixteenth century. Arasa Kesari is the author of the translation. He has given full play to his poetic genius."

"Who is Arasa Kesari?"

"He was the elder brother of Pararasa Sekaran VIII, who reigned in Jaffna between 1591 and 1615."

I thanked my brother for the information given me. Then my aunt Mrs. Karalar came to our house. I asked her how our ancestors travelled before the bullock-cart and horse-carriage were introduced.

She said:- "The earliest conveyance used by our ancestors was palanquin - a covered conveyance used in India and China."

I said: "The first palanquin I saw was at my grand-sunt's "Manica Villa" at Nallur."

She said:- "Two beams project in front and behind for men to carry it on their shoulders. They have to bear it evenly when proceeding, so the men in front sing:- "Ah, ah" and those behind "ooh, ooh." One of our ancestors of Atchuvvely Kula Nayaka Mappana Mudaliyar possessed a palanquin." This is now in the Jaffna Museum.

Then I asked her:- "Who is the first Gnana Prakasar in our family?"

"That name was given first to the Prince Martyr, son of Sankily Rajah. It is an adaptation of "Louis".

Then my mother said:- "My maternal grand-father was one Gnana Prakasar. When he was working under a missionary, he was paid a low salary. He contrived a device to increase his pay. He was a natural actor. One day he was walking in a field with the padre. Suddenly he knelt on the ground with upraised head and hands. Tears flowed from his eyes. (He had applied onion juice to them)

The padre asked:- "What is it, Tamber?" - that is his home name. He replied:- "I saw the Holy Ghost." Next day, his salary was raised." All had a hearty laugh, including my father.

One day, my parents took me to Manipay, to attend a wedding of one of our relatives. Then I saw the grandeur of Eastern weddings. The bridegroom is seated on an elephant, fly-whisks sway on both sides of the mounted bridegroom, white parasols and the triumphant Bull Flag of the Jaffna Royal House float in front of the procession. Drums of various kinds and Eastern orchestra create lively rhythm and music. The conch trumpets.

The conch is still used in our Hindu temples. Even now I hear the conch blowing near Stone House in the temple of our Hindu relatives.

The conch shell was used in ^{the} Minoan cult for summoning divinity. In Phoenician, Greek and later times, these conch shell trumpets were essentially used in the Mediterranean. European travellers have found them in actual use in East Indies, Japan, and by Alfurs in Ceram; the Paupmans in New Guinea, as well as in South Sea Islands as far as New Zealand and in many places in America - (Migrations of Early Culture - G. Elliot Smith.)

I closely saw the traditional jewels of a bride, when my mother's sister married at Atchuvvely. She wore a coronet-jewel above her forehead, the Sun and the Moon jewels on her head, a cobra jewel slipping down her tresses behind, a crescent nose-ring with a pearl hanging, reflecting the colours of sun-rays, and earrings set with precious stones, with a bell-shaped pendant fringed with pearls.

The Sun and the Moon are emblems of the Royal House of Jaffna and the cobra, emblem of Naga kings whose kingdom declined at the arrival of the Kings of Ganga Vamsa.

The flag of the Jaffna Royal House possessed by our ancestor Kula Sekara Mudaliyar, which is now in rags, shows these emblems together with the bull conch.

The old coins discovered by my father who excavated his garden at the direction of my brother Prakasar, was identified by the latter as the coins of our ancient kings, as they tallied with

the Portuguese historians drawing of the coat-of-arms of Para Rasa Sekeran VIII (1591 - 1616) under the Portuguese Crown. They had the same emblems the Sun and the Moon and six groups of each three Stars, the bull concham and the word 'Setu' underneath. Swami Gnana Prakasar has published a treatise on "The Forgotten Coinage of the Jaffna Kings".

The humped Indian bull (Bos Indicus) freely figured in Sumerian, Hittite, Phoenician and Kassite seals as the sacred animal of the East. (The Indo-Sumerian Seals deciphered p 20, L. A. Waddell). The Hittite god is seated on the bull throne. Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman art stands on a bull. The bull that supports the Jupiter of Syria has a rosette on the forehead between eyes. In "The Hittite Empire" John Garstang says that the combination of the bull with the thunderbolt as emblems of deity suggests that the animal may have been chosen to represent the sky god not merely of its virility but of its voice; for in the peal of thunder primitive man may well have heard the bellowing of a celestial bull. It is from the Indian mythology that we get our nearest insight into the character of these deities and the meaning of those sculptures. For the bull represents Siva whose emblem was a trident and an axe. The horns of the bull are wreathed with garlands.

So my father made researches through his foster-son, who published "A Critical History of Jaffna" at our press, "The Tamils: Their Early History and Religion" and numerous books at the Catholic Mission Press, Jaffna, and "A History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon" at the Colombo Mission Press.

My father produced the first Tamil Geometry written by Rev. Daniel Velupillai of Atchuvally. He himself engraved the illustrative blocks which elicited the praise of Judge Wyman Katira Vel Pillai in verse.

His engraving was admired by a royal personage. Siva Sambu Pulavar had some verses printed by my father in praise of Patkara Setu Pati, Maha Rajah of Ramnad. The verses consisted of Ter Venpa - in the shape of a chariot each letter enclosed in squares formed by the lines and two circles representing the wheels, read across and then the last line of the verse, read from top to bottom, like a cross-word puzzle, in the centre.

Another poem of Iraddai Naga Pantham in the shape of two cobras entwined; it could be read through the coils from different directions, the letters tallying like cross word puzzle.

So the poet took the artistically printed booklet to the Maha Rajah, who gave a prize to the poet, and eulogized my father for the excellent art of printing.

I remember my father composing an Adda Naga Pantham (eight cobras entwined) poem.

Besides his literary activities, he took interest in artistic jewels and brought an expert and taught the local goldsmiths to turn out lovely jewels. He went to India and observed Indian architecture and when he built our church at Atchuvally, he introduced a combination of Eastern and Western architecture, designed by himself. His relentless energy brought a Tamil School, English School, and Post Office and Dispensary.

Even today people talk of his wonderful pills which cure diseases with his first prescription and free treatment. Western treatment takes a month to cure enteric fever. My father's pills stopped the fever in four days.

He retired from public service in his 67th year. Sir Ponnampalam Arunachalam, Registrar-General regarded him as the best among the Registrars. Sir Ponnampalam used to converse with him regarding Sinhalese place-names and Jaffna history, and local customs. Savaralu Nayakar, Poet Laureate of the French Academy at Karaikal was attracted by my father's poems. As he was old he asked my father to pay him a visit. Before he could see my father he died. The sun sets behind the purpling palms leaving a red glow in the darkening sky. Birds take rest nestling in shady trees and palmy fronds. The lotus closes its petals. The sun flower droops. The stars twinkling in the darkening sky beckon us to another world.

It was the end of the first World War in 1918. My mother has been paralysed, my elder brother who was the local postmaster had passed away a few years before. I left for Singapore. Within four months. Four members of my family died in my absence. My younger brother who was a law student and a teacher at St. Benedict's College, had a last look at me when I boarded a steamer full of IndoChina troops returning from war. My virgin sister who was self-sacrificing herself in many household duties shed tears secretly, when I left with a presentiment that she would not see me any more. On my return my mother died. Within a month my mother-in-law followed her. My dear wife passed away after a few years. Then my father enduring all sorrows left this world after 10 days on the 4th of April 1934.

Stone house decayed. The groves moaned. Birds and animals became prey to adventurers. The gay gatherings and busy activities departed. The village lost its benefactor.

STONE HOUSE